

## **Increase Sales by Getting Better Known and Trusted** **The 10-Minute Rule for Getting Started** by **Lillian D. Bjorseth, president** **Duoforce Enterprises, Inc.**

Let's suppose you are looking for a web site developer and have two equally impressive brochures on your desk. For one company you have a personal reference; none of your contacts know or have heard of the other one. The choice is easy because we prefer to do business with people we know and trust or those who have been referred by people we know and trust.

If you apply that rationale to your business and career, all you have to do is get known and trusted by more and more people who buy what you sell. If you catch a hint of marketing in that theory, you're right. That's the rub for most people. You know well how to do what you do. You are far less sure, and maybe even intimidated, about how to let the world know that you know.

The most effective marketing tool by far is word-of-mouth referrals. I know of only two ways to get them. One is to meet people who need your products or services and/or will tell other potential customers about you. The other is to use the media through tools such as releases, columns and press conferences or to become the subject matter expert the media quotes in your area of expertise. Positioning yourself through publicity is a proven way to begin building *trust* in people who do not *know* you.

### **10-Minute Rule**

Here, I am sharing information on the first area: How to become more astute at meeting other people, i.e. relationship building, by using my ***10 Minute Rule for Working an Event.***

Because networking is planting seeds (not harvesting, which can take months or years), spending about 10 minutes with people you meet or reconnect with is an expeditious way to use your time at after-hours and other networking events.

It may be a shock to your ego, but people are not interested in hearing your entire sales spiel at what used to be called "the cocktail hour." Plus, you are passing up a major one-on-one sales opportunity by trying to tell people too much too quickly.

Ten minutes gives you time for small talk and a verbal business card interchange. It also provides at least five minutes for each of you to answer "how" questions that your carefully prepared introduction elicited, and for a courteous, meaningful ending.

### **Small Talk**

Small talk is those conversation starters that pave the way for a potentially productive relationship. Choose your subject carefully as men have only a few preferred topics: Sports, current events, politics and business/jobs (some women might say sports only!).

Women have a plethora of topics, hundreds it may seem to men - and many involve family, home or personal items. And, that brings up another difference: Women disclose more about their personal lives than men. Men disclose personal

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feelings; however, they are much more often about impersonal subjects such as sports teams or political candidates.

Ideally, the future will see more “give-and-take” on both sides. Men can learn to be more comfortable with subjects like fitness and wellness and general-interest topics like books, maga-zines and movies. Women can work harder at respecting men’s desires not to discuss personal and family issues and bone up on sports and current events.

### Verbal Business Card

Your two-three sentence benefit-laden introduction is the most important thing you will say about you when meeting people. If you think it’s easy, think again. I work hours with individuals and companies condensing what they do into a few powerful sentences that “are they.” The words need to flow off your tongue effortlessly and smoothly to be believable and captivating. Emphasize benefits for others versus features about yourself or your business. Once you have developed your verbal business card, practice it in the shower, in front of the mirror, on your family and friends until it is “you” and people can quickly grasp your essence.

### Business Information Exchange

The “body” of the conversation is where you emphasize more benefits of your business to other people (or people they know) as well as let them know “how” you do what you do. You want to share enough of your knowledge and expertise to establish your credibility and intrigue other people, yet not so much that their eyes glaze over or begin drifting around the room.

### The Ending

Many people are so fearful of starting conversations that they don’t even think ahead about how to extricate themselves once the information exchange has begun. Getting stuck with people, even interesting ones, can greatly diminish the benefits of two hours of attempted seed planting.

It’s okay to plan and rehearse exit statements as well as opening remarks. Since body language and tone of voice account for more than 90 percent of any face-to-face communication exchange, keep in mind that *how* you say your good-byes is more important than *what* you say.

#### **How to do it:**

- Ask for the other person’s card if you do not yet have it.
- Excuse yourself shortly after another person has joined you and others.
- Be up front:
  - “I see the client (guest/friend/associate) I invited has just arrived.”
  - “I will keep your card on file for when I need ...”
  - “I haven’t been here for awhile and I’d like to rekindle some old acquaintances.
  - “I’d like to continue this conversation, may I call you?”
  - “It’s my first time here, and I would like to talk with other members, too, to get a better feel for the organization.”

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- “Would you like to have lunch next week?”

And when all else fails ...

- “I would like to get something to eat (or drink).”

Plan time to say good-bye to everyone you met, using their first name and zeroing in on something the two of you discussed. Keep it short, upbeat and positive.

- “Kelly, it was nice meeting you. I’ll call you Thursday.”
- “Bob, thanks again for the referral for a good lawn service.”

The difference between networking and networking effectively is the difference between having to make cold calls and getting warm referrals!

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**Lillian D. Bjorseth is known for her infectious enthusiasm and her practical, insightful and pertinent content that you can apply on the spot and throughout your life. Lillian’s a Lisle-IL based people-skills speaker, trainer and author of *Breakthrough Networking: Building Relationships That Last*, *52 Ways to Break the Ice & Target Your Market* and the *Nothing Happens Until We Communicate* CD and workbook series. Her Fortune 100 experience includes more than 10 years at AT&T where she trained top executives in media and communication skills. You can reach her at [lillianspeaks@duoforce.com](mailto:lillianspeaks@duoforce.com), [www.duoforce.com](http://www.duoforce.com) or 630-983-5308.**

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